

VZCZCXRO1916  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHKUK RUEHROV  
DE RUEHMS #0025 0081343  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 081343Z JAN 07  
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7630  
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0469  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0363  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

UNCLAS MUSCAT 000025

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP, NEA/PPD, NEA/PI, AND INR/R/MR  
STATE PASS USTR FOR N. MOORJANI, J. BUNTIN  
LONDON FOR TSOU  
PARIS FOR ZEYA  
USCENTCOM FOR PLUSH  
FOREIGN PRESS CENTER FOR SILAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [MU](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: SKEPTICISM ABOUT GREATER MIDDLE EAST  
INITIATIVE, PALESTINIAN INFIGHTING.

REF: MUSCAT 00002

11. SUMMARY: Privately owned "Al-Watan" blames "illegitimate  
invasion" for crises in Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon. "Al-Watan"  
and government-owned "Oman" regret Palestinian infighting, and call  
for unity and "patient resistance" against Israel. END SUMMARY.

-----  
COVERAGE  
-----

12. Government dailies avoided reporting the Saddam Hussein  
execution almost entirely, but private dailies did provide some  
coverage (REFTEL). All dailies gave prominent coverage to  
Palestinian internecine violence.

-----  
BLOCK QUOTES: U.S. TO "REDRAW" MIDEAST MAP  
-----

13. On January 4, the privately owned daily "Al-Watan" (circulation  
42,000) wondered, "2007: A Year of Reconciliation?":

"As the Arab world ushers in the year 2007, conflict continues in  
Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon with one common cause: the presence of  
illegitimate invaders...Other similar characteristics of these  
conflicts are an increase in the killing rate, destruction of  
infrastructure and developmental projects, and continuing economic  
and social turmoil. Illegitimate invasion is the main cause of all  
these dangerous consequences that are spiraling towards civil war.  
All this plays right into the interests of the U.S., which is using  
its Greater Middle East Initiative to redraw the map of the Middle  
East to Israel's advantage. Then the U.S. can truly dominate  
militarily and scientifically, and guarantee economic control of the  
Middle East and all its markets."

-----  
PALESTINIAN INFIGHTING IS "ILLOGICAL"  
-----

14. State-owned daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) published a January  
6 editorial entitled "Palestinian Violence and the Illusion of  
Regional Peace":

"It is unfortunate that what is happening between Fatah and Hamas is  
illogical and contrary to the national interest of the Palestinian  
people who have been struggling for more than half a century to  
reclaim their rights from the Israeli entity. So this fight between

brothers is for the benefit of Israel, which has longed for such division. This scene might spiral out of control if violence continues between the Palestinian factions in front of Arab and international media. What confuses everyone is the question of who benefits from the fight and what its consequences are for the Palestinian issue."

-----  
PALESTINIAN STRIFE IS ISRAEL'S NEW "WEAPON"  
-----

15. On January 7, "Al-Watan" also published an editorial about Palestinian infighting entitled "Getting Away with Division":

"Part of understanding what is going on in Palestine is knowing that Israel has discovered another weapon to use against the Palestinians: divide and rule, in addition to executing any leaders who begin to unify the Palestinians. The Israelis' invasion plan requires them to keep Palestinians fighting amongst themselves, while maintaining a blockade. This scenario, so destructive for Palestinians, must be met with an understanding of the situation that leads Palestinians to unify their efforts and stand to face the enemy. The Palestinians need to prove that they can resist patiently. Unity is the only escape from this dilemma."

GRAPPO